Assassinations Committee Extended For Two Years

WASHINGTON, March 31. (AP) — The House Assassinations Committee, granted two years to do its work, will "lay to rest all the rumors and rumors of rumors" about the murders of John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, its chairman promises.

A sharply divided House extended the committee's life through 1978 by a vote of 230 to 181 yesterday after its controversial chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague, resigned.

Chairman Louis Stokes (Dem.), Ohio, said an unofficial count had indicated that if Sprague had not resigned, the committee might have been disbanded by about 20 votes. He and other panel members praised Sprague and said that he had been unfairly maligned by the committee's former chairman, Representative Henry B. Gonzalez (Dem.), Texas.

Gonzalez resigned from the panel last month when its members and the House leadership refused to back his attempt to dismiss Sprague.

Stokes said he expected to obtain a $2,700,000 budget this year. At one point, the panel had asked for $6,500,000.

Stokes told the House that the committee was pursuing new leads and talking to new witnesses. But critics demanding proof tried to force the first secret House session since the 1880s to make the panel spell out its evidence.

That effort was defeated 226 to 185 on the argument by Stokes that leaks of names of the witnesses could put their lives in danger.

Representative B.F. Sisk (Dem.), California, complained that at a closed briefing on the evidence, "the only thing I heard was that you have evidence that X overheard Y and Z say something."

Reresentative Charles E. Wiggins (Rep.), California, said he considered the committee irresponsible for questioning reputed underworld figure Santo Trafficante in public when it knew he would refuse to testify on Fifth Amendment grounds.

Wiggins likened "that spectacle" to the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy's hearings on alleged Communists in Government 25 years ago.

Stokes cut short a press conference when he was asked repeatedly about his contention that a man who apparently committed suicide in Florida Tuesday would have been "a crucial witness."

George de Mohrenschildt, 65, a Russian-born geologist who was a friend of Lee Harvey Oswald, was found dead of a shotgun wound a few hours after a House Assassinations Committee investigator tried to see him.

Representative Eldon Rudd (Rep.), Arizona, contended that the committee was trying to take advantage of De Mohrens childt's death by leaving the impression he had substantial information when t here was no proof of that.